



Report on the Lagos Dialogue and Workshop on
Targeting Mental Models of Climate Change Risk to
Facilitate Climate Action (MECCA) Research Project
Held on the 12th of May, 2023.

Hosted by **sustyvibes**[®]



Table of Contents

1. Summary.....	3
2. Background.....	5
3. Workshop Design.....	6
4. Presentations and Discussions.....	7
5. Breakout Discussions.....	16
6. Conclusion.....	22
7. Photo Gallery.....	23
8. Annexes.....	24
a. Workshop Agenda.....	24
b. MECCA Workshop Presenters.....	25
c. Project Partners.....	26
d. SustyVibes Team.....	27

Summary

On the 12th of May 2023, SustyVibes hosted a dialogue and workshop on Targeting Mental Models of Climate Change risk to facilitate Climate Action (MECCA) research project in Lagos, Nigeria. The MECCA research was formed to develop pathways for facilitating effective climate action among vulnerable communities with low capacities for both climate adaptation and mitigation. The research was carried out in East Africa (Lake Victoria) and West Africa (Lagos). A total of 31 participants attended the workshop with 18 key stakeholders and 5 members of the SustyVibes team participating in person. The MECCA research team and two other key stakeholders joined in virtually.

The workshop participants included stakeholders working in academia, government, business, and media with interests in environment and health in Lagos state. The primary objective of the workshop was to discuss insights from the preliminary research conducted in Lagos. It also served as a platform to collect feedback from stakeholders. Through the workshop, the MECCA team had an opportunity to share the research methodology and tools with the stakeholders. Participants were taken through the project design, research methodology, and the results. An assessment of the multivalent causes of climate change was explored and a range of climate solutions for the state were discussed.

Overall, the workshop provided an opportunity for the invited stakeholders to provide critical feedback for the final phase of the project. More importantly, the comments, questions, and recommendations put forward throughout the workshop have been documented in this report to build on the preliminary report earlier developed by the MECCA team. Our team at SustyVibes was very impressed with the interest and engagement expressed by the stakeholders in Lagos. The experience has reinforced our commitment to working on climate change and mental health issues in Africa in ways that are interdisciplinary, evidence-based, and collaborative.

MECCA is a collaborative project involving partners at Utrecht University, Netherlands; the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany;

and the University of Bergen, Norway. The project is funded by the European Union JPI-Climate program for transnational collaborative research. The complexity of the climate crisis in Africa is further exacerbated by economic inequities, increased vulnerabilities, low awareness, and adaptive capacity as well as the negative impacts of rising temperatures on food, health, and the environment at large. This dynamic presents an increased burden on decision-makers in the continent who are required to respond to these impacts at scale. Interdisciplinary efforts that bridge science and society together offer promise in tackling these challenges.

MECCA is an interdisciplinary project focused on two similar case studies; Lagos, and Lake Victoria in an aim to generate forecasts and simulations of climatic impacts in both cities and then to provide insights into the perception of climate change by residents and other core stakeholders. The hydrodynamic modelling was led by Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, mental models' measurement and analysis were led by Utrecht University, and the risk perception assessment was led by the University of Bergen. Both cities were selected due to their high vulnerability to climate change impacts on their dense populations, and inadequate research attention on mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Other partners such as the Lagos State Ministry of Environment International Climate Change Development Initiative, Centre for Disaster Risk and Crisis Reduction (CDRCR), the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), and the University of Lagos were involved in the project.

Background

MECCA is a collaborative project involving partners at Utrecht University, Netherlands; the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany; and the University of Bergen, Norway. The project is funded by the European Union JPI-Climate program for transnational collaborative research. The complexity of the climate crisis in Africa is further exacerbated by economic inequities, increased vulnerabilities, low awareness, and adaptive capacity as well as the negative impacts of rising temperatures on food, health, and the environment at large. This dynamic presents an increased burden on decision-makers in the continent who are required to respond to these impacts at scale. Interdisciplinary efforts that bridge science and society together offer promise in tackling these challenges.

MECCA is an interdisciplinary project focused on two similar case studies; Lagos, and Lake Victoria in an aim to generate forecasts and simulations of climatic impacts in both cities and then to provide insights into the perception of climate change by residents and other core stakeholders. The hydrodynamic modelling was led by Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, mental models' measurement and analysis were led by Utrecht University, and the risk perception assessment was led by the University of Bergen. Both cities were selected due to their high vulnerability to climate change impacts on their dense populations, and inadequate research attention on mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Other partners such as the Lagos State Ministry of Environment, International Climate Change Development Initiative, Centre for Disaster Risk and Crisis Reduction (CDRCR), the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER), and the University of Lagos were involved in the project.



Workshop Design

The workshop was designed to facilitate an interactive and participatory space for invited stakeholders. A preliminary report draft with results from the research was shared with all stakeholders up to a week before the workshop.

1. Workshop Agenda

Working closely with the MECCA team, a workshop agenda was developed to allow time for engagement and comments following presentations.

2. Research Presentations

Five of the MECCA Research team involved in the project were available to make presentations on their involvement and findings from the project.

3. Stakeholder Representation

The workshop stakeholders were carefully considered, bringing a diverse range of researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and experts to a space that explores challenges and opportunities associated with climate change and risk perceptions in Lagos State

4. Group Discussions

Since the crux of the workshop was to collect insights on the research, participants were grouped into teams of four to brainstorm and answer questions together as groups. These groups were diverse and the space was participatory.

5. Compensation

All workshop participants were provided with a tea break, lunch, and a small inconvenience fee.

6. Documentation and Feedback

The key presentation points, recommendations, questions, comments, and insights from the workshop were documented to support this report's development.



Presentations and Discussions

1. Welcome Address

Jennifer Uchendu (Founder, SustyVibes) welcomed the participants and took them through a brief overview of SustyVibes and the work of The Eco-anxiety Africa Project (TEAP). SustyVibes is a youth-led and youth-focused organisation making environmental sustainability actionable, relatable and fun for people. Recognizing the often ignored psychological burden that climate change causes on Africans, SustyVibes started her stand-alone project named The Eco-anxiety Africa Project (TEAP), aimed at exploring the intersection of climate change and mental health through space making, research, community action and climate aware psychotherapy. Stakeholders, including the SustyVibes team, had an opportunity to introduce themselves and their work to everyone.



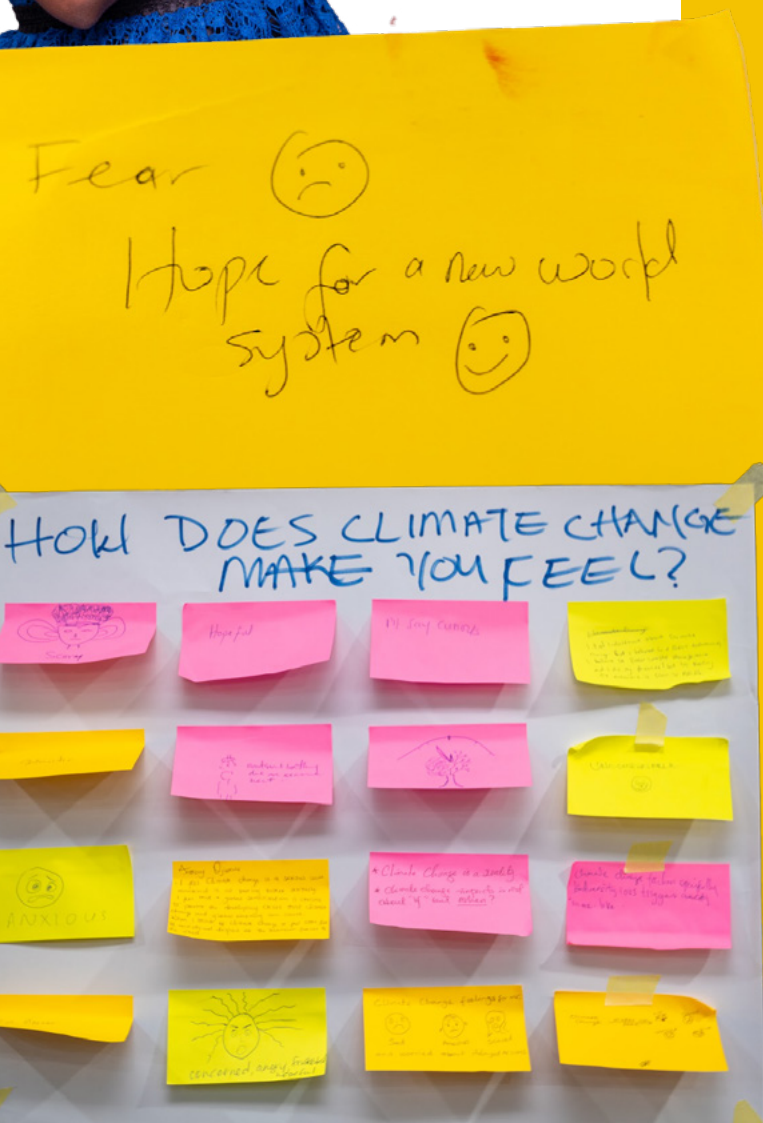
Climate Emotions Check-in

At the start of the workshop, participants were invited to share their feelings about climate change. They expressed and shared their feelings about climate change through words, abstract drawings etc.

Some of the drawings were also abstract demonstrating the complex and different emotional experiences linked with this global issue.

The variety of responses included expressions of feelings such as despair, anxiety, drive, nervousness, worry, fear, etc. Some comments included phrases such as:

- “climate change is a reality”
- “climate change is a serious issue, not many people are taking it seriously”,
- “climate impact is not about IF but WHEN”,





2. Presentations

// Introduction to the MECCA Project - Dr Maryse Chappin

Dr Maryse Chappin highlighted the importance of the MECCA research project for society and science. She further discussed the analysis of the gap between stakeholders' perceptions of change, risk, and projected impacts of human activities under changing climatic conditions in both regions.

Key highlights discussed

1. The importance of capacity building for all stakeholders during the research process
2. The need for region-specific and relevant project actions and outcomes
3. The importance of understanding the influences behind individual mental models on climate change risk perception and responses.

Comments from the Floor

1. A participant asked Dr Chappin to provide details on the central research question of the project, and she replied by citing the need for obtaining balance and understanding the perspective of people with regard to climate impact, actions, and consequences from both social science and natural science point of view. She also explained that the research was chiefly focused on how researchers and policymakers can together develop climate adaptation and mitigation strategies informed by risk perceptions in the research.
2. Another participant commented on the potential value of the research insights from a Lagos government perspective and also requested that the final report be shared with him for further action.

// Mental Models of Climate Change In Lagos - Dr Karlijn van den Broek

Dr Karlijn van den Broek highlighted some of the mental models of Lagos residents who participated in the research. The M-tool was used to capture the different ways residents perceive complex systems. The researchers derived the average mental models on the causes of climate change as well as its consequences. The cited causes of climate change included greenhouse gases, population growth, deforestation, and urban development.

Key highlights discussed


1. The presentation analysed Lagos residents perceptions of climate change, identified causes and implications, and offered adaptation and mitigation solutions.
2. Research participants expressed considerable worries about climate change but also expressed optimism about tackling it.
3. Waste management, awareness-raising, and environmental regulations were recommended as effective strategies to tackle climate change challenges in Lagos

Comments from the Floor

1. A participant asked about people's perceptions of heatwaves in Lagos and if that was featured in the results. Dr Karlijn responded that heat waves were among the key consequences of climate change cited by the research participants.
2. An inquiry was made into the results from the mental models recorded in the different genders and ages and stakeholder groups and how it might influence the research, Dr Karlijn disclosed that further analysis of the results will be able to reveal these details and that the final report will aim to cover these when finalized.

3. Another participant questioned the results on population increase as a cause of climate change from the research participant's perspective. They wanted to know if this cause of climate change was a direct result of failure to mitigate other climate change causes. Dr Karlijn responded that while population growth does not have a direct impact on climate change, it increases consumption rates and inevitably greenhouse gases emission. These results thus show us a people's perception of climate change risk, causes, and consequences and not necessarily the scientific and accurate truths on climate change.
4. A question was asked on the similarities between the findings from Lagos and Lake Victoria. They further sought to know the educational backgrounds of the research participants. Dr Karlijn's response to this was that the data was very different in the two cities, she cited that, for instance, issues with waste management did not surface in Lake Victoria and instead, emphasis was placed on impacts on fishing and water levels in the region.
5. Other participants raised questions on the M-tool as well as the need for a full disclosure of the research questions used in Lagos to inform the mental models.





Climate Change Perceptions, Expectations, Observations, and Projections in Lagos - Dr Stefan Liersch

Dr Stefan Liersch took the workshop participants through results from a survey done with 28 experts and community members on climate change perceptions in Lagos. He further discussed hydrodynamic models for tackling flooding risk in Lagos. He concluded that the results from the community members were unexpected and pushed the researchers to reflect on the potential causes for the results.

Key highlights discussed

1. Community members had more diverse views on the causes of climate change. While some also acknowledged human activities and environmental factors, a significant number attributed climate change to governance and policy ineffectiveness
2. Emotional factors were identified as influential in driving action or inaction toward climate change, and mental health impacts were noted.
3. The presentation showed that members shifted their emphasis from present environmental hazards to future concerns for human well-being, including health impacts and potential migration.
4. COVID-19 significantly impacted key stakeholders in NIMET who were to provide data useful to the research.

Comments from the Floor

1. A participant wanted to understand the role of emotions on responses and perceptions of climate change and what the potential health impacts could look like in Lagos.
2. A participant emphasized the need to fact-check realities on the ground with regard to government-led climate change efforts. They further stated that similar research has been carried out in Lagos and called our remarks

on inaction from the Lagos government end. They cited factors such as migration, fossil fuel diversification, and the complexities of cities like Lagos feeding into the existing narratives.

3. Another participant touched on some of the opinions of the community residents on the causes of climate change and inquired if that response resulted from a lack of adequate climate change communication. Dr Stefan's remark on the question validated the need for more climate change communication citing the possibility of misconception in the minds of people.
4. Deliberations were made on carrying relevant government agencies along in research like this, issues around open data policies in Nigeria as well as calls for funding to support local researchers who are more familiar with the cities to lead.



Stakeholder Engagement and Local Collaboration - Dr Usman Isyaku

Dr Usman Isyaku provided an overview of the experience of stakeholder mapping and engagement in Lagos while conducting fieldwork for the MECCA Research Project. He further discussed some of the unexpected results and challenges in contacting key government stakeholders during the research project. He concluded that the stakeholder engagement process, though impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, reflected in the overall quality of data the researchers required for the project.

Key highlights discussed

1. Several community members believe that waste management is a cause of climate change and see climate change as an environmental hazard.
2. Bureaucratic delays and non-compliance by some government agencies posed challenges to the research process, highlighting the need for improved coordination among stakeholders.
3. In the local communities' perceptions, communities identified increased heat waves as a large consequence of climate change in Lagos.
4. Secondary requests for hydrometeorological data were not approved and thus hampered the project's data collection efforts.

Please note that due to time constraints, the facilitator asked that comments from this presentation be taken after the final presentation by Dr Charles Ogunbode.



Climate Change Risk Perception in Lagos - Dr Charles Ogunbode


Dr Charles Ogunbode presented the risk perceptions of climate change from the MECCA research project with a comparison of results from Lake Victoria. The research goal was to explore ideas for climate action by vulnerable communities and thus perceptions of climate change risk were very integral to the research.

Key highlights discussed

1. Lagos residents demonstrated moderate to high levels of confidence in both human and government action to address climate change.
2. The survey results conducted in Lagos indicate that people in Lagos generally demonstrate significant levels of climate change risk perception. In general, the rating of the magnitude of the threats caused by climate change is moderate.
3. Approximately 1 in 3 people expressed uncertainty regarding the ease or difficulty of taking action on climate change, both at an individual and collective level. This suggests a lack of clarity or awareness about the practical steps that can be taken to address climate change in Lagos.

Comments from the Floor

1. A participant inquired about efforts to have interviews in local languages. Dr. Charles responded by saying that there was a challenge in translating some English terms to the local Nigerian dialect, however, he pointed out that pidgin English which is generally used in Nigeria was adopted for the research. Dr Usman also pointed out that some interviews were conducted in local languages.
2. Another participant requested that the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research be included in the research as there were several aligning interests on climate and health.
3. An inquiry was made on comparative analysis of the result across

A vertical strip of pink daisy flowers with yellow centers runs along the left edge of the page.

communities in the research to show commonalities in environmental hazards and vulnerabilities.

4. A participant also iterated that government policies are beneficial where people experience difficulty in incorporating sustainable lifestyles.





3. Breakout Discussions

The breakout session was designed to facilitate discussions among groups and gather feedback from participants on the research findings. The participants were divided into four groups with one member of the SustyVibes team serving as group facilitators. They were provided with questions to discuss during the session. Group engagement, problem-solving, and open debates were encouraged during the session. The participants were grouped with a mix of professional experiences and areas of interest. This session took about 45 minutes including group presentations.

Breakout Session Questions

1. What did you think of the research findings? Discuss in terms of relevance, and value (if any).
2. How might these findings be applied in practice for Lagos State?
3. What could the next steps look like after this research? For the MECCA team, the Lagos government, and other core stakeholders?
4. Have these research findings inspired new questions?

The responses to these questions have been grouped into three key themes; the value of the research, key recommendations and new questions

Summary of Group 1 Presentation

Value of the research

- An acknowledgment of the relevance and value of the research findings in terms of providing an opportunity to raise awareness about climate change in Lagos, such as informing the media, advocacy, and policy-making in the state.
- The research also inspires new ways for climate communication using comedy, and social media (e.g Tiktok) - to reach the younger generation who have a significantly larger population size in Nigeria and have specific ways of understanding concepts..
- This research helps to draw the connections between the personal and community impacts of climate change.
- The concept of **Not in my Backyard** resurfaces in this research where community-level action can be encouraged from a personal impact perspective and working together can help lessen the burden of outcomes.

? New Questions

1. Does data on climate change in Lagos exist and are they accessible?
2. How do we bridge the gap between perceived and actual risk from this research - This could be potentially addressed in the final research report.

Key Recommendations

1. The Lagos state government should leverage the results from this research to foster more interdisciplinary dialogues with other actors in the state to seek a way forward to tackle the complex challenges.
2. The MECCA team should build more relationships, collaborations, and networks starting from the workshop participants to help amplify the research's output and drive further action in the state.
3. Having on-the-ground and in-country experience is critical to the success of research like this. Local knowledge should therefore be leveraged.

Summary of Group 2 Presentation

Value of the research

- Some members expressed disagreement with the research findings, suggesting a need for deeper exploration of the relationship between mental health and climate change in this research.
- The research was crucial, illuminating and enlightening for the group as members got a chance to understand the severity of the problem.

? New Questions

1. What does effective waste management look like for the average Lagosian living in a vulnerable community?
2. How much awareness is enough? How do we assess levels of awareness and move to other factors that contribute to inaction?
3. Why is the heatwave increasing? And how much further can education go into helping people find answers to these often technical questions?

Key Recommendations

1. Residents should be taught to inculcate effective waste management processes and governments should both create awareness on as well as enforce existing policies with penalties for defaulters. This should go hand in hand with incentivizing the right behaviors.
2. MECCA team can conduct another stakeholder map now that the COVID-19 pandemic is over and start to make these connections.
3. Advocacy on climate change must start at the elementary levels where children and youths are taught about climate action and effective environmental protection in Nigeria.
4. Advocacy should also be implemented in collaboration with community leaders and grassroots organisations. There are opportunities in the Nigerian Nollywood sector where local films can help drive awareness and action.
5. Active intention on bridging climate change discourse with health can also help drive action because Nigerians typically respond highly to information around survival and wellbeing.

Summary of Group 3 Presentation

Value of the research

- This research should serve as a wake-up call for policymakers
- The group felt there were existing gaps in the research due to the perception-based approach. Further explanation of the methodology for data collection could help clarify this.
- Members of the group affirmed the research's input as aligning with other efforts currently run by the Lagos government in terms of waste management, citizen behaviors etc.

? New Questions

1. What plans and considerations are available for loss and damage (climate justice) finance?
2. How can we leverage this for grassroots education that is based on mental models?
3. How can we simplify and amplify the research report so that more people get access to this information?

Key Recommendations

1. Involving religious leaders and engaging local stakeholders more on the research outputs and outcomes.
2. The research recommendations as a whole must recognize the socio-economic context of Lagos state through realistic, comparative analysis with similar cities in size and complexity.
3. There needs to be a comparison between communities in the research for proper sense-making of the data.
4. This group also highlighted the missing link on mental health in the research presentation.

Summary of Group 4 Presentation

Value of the research

- Appreciation of the MECCA team for their thoughtfulness in developing a workshop with breakout groups to inform the final research report
- The research reinforces the importance of the subject matter by placing it in the front burner of discourse on the environment for policymakers and key actors..
- The research is useful for research institutes in Lagos and the country as a whole as it forms a baseline for future studies to be carried out.
- The research helps to show existing climate narratives and interpretations in Lagos state.
- The research is critical for advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

? New Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of climate change among our people?
2. Need to have a distinction between responses between age groups as this can help with communication models
3. How is information disseminated to people of varying education levels and this has an impact on the overall result.

Key Recommendations

1. Actionable recommendations are missing from the research
2. Inclusion of relevant stakeholders to overall research
3. Develop actionable plans with milestones and timelines to help track success and relevance.
4. There seems to be a difference in perception of climate change from both the people and government perspective.



Photos from Breakout Session

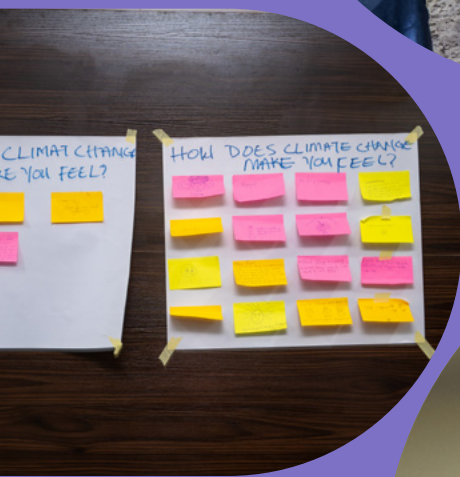
Conclusion

The Lagos Dialogue and Workshop on the MECCA Research Project provided participants with invaluable insights into the MECCA research. It was a refreshing opportunity to have rich dialogues on interdisciplinary research efforts for climate change in Nigeria. From the workshop presentations, it was evident that residents of Lagos are aware of the causes and consequences of climate change and although there were unusual results which created more questions on the overall methodology, the workshop participants appreciated the depth of information gathered and clamoured for even further analysis on demography, communities reached and levels of education. The workshop in itself was a welcome idea for all and provided our team at SustyVibes an opportunity to directly engage with key actors (other than youth) on issues around climate change, mental health and risk perception.

The breakout session was highly enriching and the workshop participants had an opportunity to further engage on the subject matter. It allowed for deep reflection on the relevance of the research for Lagos state and even in their own work. They were also able to provide brilliant recommendations which will now inform the final research report. New questions were also inspired and creative climate communication ideas were raised. Ultimately, the breakout discussions created a space for empowering, open and constructive recommendations on ways forward for the MECCA team.

Ultimately, the Lagos Dialogue and Workshop on the MECCA Research Project was successful in achieving its set objectives. Integrating the listed recommendation in addition to further analysis and increased stakeholder engagement will ensure that this report findings are amplified and effective in guiding policy for the state. Our team at SustyVibes are grateful to the MECCA team for the opportunity to have hosted the workshop.

Photo gallery



Annexes

(A) Workshop Agenda

Agenda	Time
Registration	10:00 AM - 10:15 AM
Welcome Address, Introductions, and Expectations from the Workshop	10:15 AM - 10:45 AM
MECCA Presentation 1 - Introduction of the Project	10:45 AM - 11:00 AM
MECCA Presentation 2 - Mental Models of Climate Change In Lagos	11:05 AM - 11:30 AM
Tea/Bathroom Break	11:30 AM - 11:45 AM
MECCA Presentation 3 - Climate Change Perceptions, Expectations, Observations, and Projections in Lagos	11:45 AM - 12:05 AM
MECCA Presentation 4 - Stakeholder Engagement and Local Collaborations	12:05 AM - 12:25 AM
MECCA Presentation 5 - Climate Change Risk Perceptions in Lagos	12:25 AM - 12:45 AM
Group Activity and Presentation	12:45 PM - 1:45 PM
Debrief and Next Steps	1:45 PM - 2:00 PM
Lunch and Networking	2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Annexes

(B) MECCA Workshop Presenters



Dr Stefan Liersch
Researcher, Potsdam Institute for
Climate Impact Research



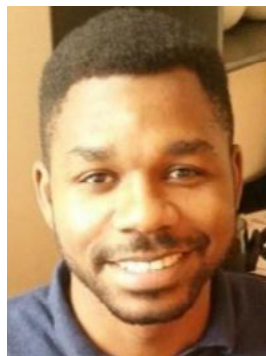
Dr Karlijn van den Broek
Assistant Professor
Copernicus Institute of Sustainable
Development, Utrecht University



Dr Maryse Chappin
Associate Professor, Innovation
Studies group of the Copernicus
Institute of Sustainable
Development, Utrecht University



Dr Usman Isyaku
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Department of
Psychosocial Science, University of Bergen



Dr Charles Ogunbode
Assistant Professor, Applied Psychology,
University of Nottingham

Annexes

(C) Project Partners

Consortium partners



Utrecht University



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



POTSDAM INSTITUTE FOR
CLIMATE IMPACT RESEARCH

National funding organizations



The Research Council
of Norway



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

Annexes

(F) SustyVibes Team



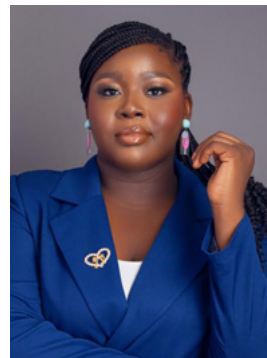
Jennifer Uchendu
Founder



Ayomide Olude
Project Manager, TEAP



Opeyemi Ogundeji
Head, Learning and Impact



Oluwaseyi Agboola
Communications Manager



Hope Lekwa
Head, Research Team

Get Involved

EMAIL:

info@sustyvibes.org

WEBSITE:

www.sustyvibes.org



@Sustyvibes



@teap_africa



@teap.africa



@teap.africa



The Eco-anxiety Africa Project

Website: teap.sustyvibes.org

sustyvibes[®]



teap

The Eco-Anxiety
Africa Project